

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY  
USLO RIYADH PRIORITY  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1234

RIYADH FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFRO, IS, US, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)  
SUBJECT: SECVISIT: ISRAELI REACTION TO SECRETARY'S VISIT

BEGIN SUMMARY: ISRAELI REACTION TO THE VISIT BY SECRETARY  
VANCE COMBINES SATISFACTION AT THE REAFFIRMATION OF CLOSE  
U.S./ ISRAELI TIES WITH WORRY ABOUT ANTICIPATED U.S. PRESSURE  
ON ISRAEL AND AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION IN  
GENERAL AND THE SECRETARY IN PARTICULAR. PARTLY IN RESPONSE  
TO THE LATTER FACTOR WE BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN A STIFFENING  
IN RECENT WEEKS OF ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MIDDLE EAST  
NEGOTIATIONS. END SUMMARY

1. BASED ON OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI POLITICAL FIGURES  
AND OBSERVERS AND ON A REVIEW OF EDITORIAL COMMENT BY ISRAEL'S  
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MORE THOUGHTFUL JOURNALISTS, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE REACTION  
HERE TO THE VISIT BY THE SECRETARY HAS BEEN FAVORABLE,  
ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN. THE  
FAVORABLE RESPONSE CENTERS ON THE GENERAL SATISFACTION  
FELT BY ISRAELIS THAT THEIR COUNTRY WAS THE FIRST STOP  
ON THE NEW SECRETARY'S FIRST VISIT ABROAD. THEY SEE THIS  
AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR TRADITIONAL TIES WITH THE U.S.

AND AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. AL HAMISHMAR (MAPAM) WROTE ON FEBRUARY 18: "THE FACT THAT JERUSALEM WAS PICKED FOR THE FIRST STOP ON MR. VANCE'S TOUR, AND THAT THIS TRIP WAS UNDERTAKEN SO SOON AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY OF STATE, TESTIFIES TO THE CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. ATTACHES TO MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS." MAARIV (INDEPENDENT) AHD WRITTEN A DAY EARLIER THAT THE VISIT ENDED "...WITH A RENEWED STRESS ON TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP AND WITH A BETTER ACQUAINTANCE ON THE PART OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WITH ISRAEL'S VIEWS ON HOW TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT."

2. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS AN UNEASY FEELING ON THE PART OF MANY ISRAELIS THAT THE U.S. WILL SOON EXERT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN ORDER TO ADVANCE TOWARD MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS. THE SECRETARY'S VISIT IS INTERPRETED IN SOME QUARTERS AS A PEACEFUL INTERLUDE BEFORE THIS ANTICIPATED PRESSURE. THESE EXPECTATIONS OF CONCERN ARE OFTEN LINKED TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED SATISFACTION ABOUT CONTINUING CLOSE TIES. FOR EXAMPLE, DAVAR (HISTADRUT) WROTE ON FEBRUARY 17 THAT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT "STRENGTHENED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL FOLLOW THE PATH OF FIRENDSHIP AND CONCERN FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY, EVEN THOUGH THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE HEADED FOR DISCUSSIONS AND DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON THE NATURE OF THE SETTLEMENT, THE TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE AND THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM". THE SAME PAPER TODAY SPEAKS OF THE ANTICIPATED GNEEVA CONFERENECE AND WARNS THAT "ISRAEL MUST MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR THESE TALKS AND DRAW UP WORKING DOCUMENTS, PROPOSALLES  
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AND PROGRAMS SO THAT THE INITIATIVE REVERTS TO HER." THE MOST CRITICAL COMMENT OF THIS NATURE COMES FROM ZEEV SCHIFF, THE MILITARY CORRESPONDENT FOR HAARETZ (INDEPENDENT), WHO LOOKS AT THE CBU DECISION AS WELL AS THE VANCE VISIT AND SEES AN AEMRICAN TENDENCY TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL RATHER THAN MILITARY AID IN ORDER "TO SEE TO IT THAT ISRAEL'S WAR MACHINERY DOES NOT BECOME TOO STRONG AND TO PREVENT IT FROM SELLING ITS ARMS ABROAD, WITH THE RESULT THAT ISRAEL WOULD BECOME MORE DEPENDENT ON THE U.S. AND MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO U.S. PRESSURES."

3. POSSIBLY AS A REACTION TO THIS ANTICIPATED U.S. PRESSURE, THERE HAVE BEEN CALLS FOR EFFORTS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL TO WORK OUT JOINT STRATEGIES FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD. SEVERAL PAPERS REPORTED THAT ISRAELI OFFICIALS PROPOSED THIS DURING THEIR CONVERSTATIONS WITH THE SECRETARY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE JERUSALEM POST WROTE ON FEBRUARY 17 THAT "ISRAEL'S OFFICIALS SPOKE IN TERMS OF A 'NEW JOINT STRATEGY' TO BE MOSDED BY ISRAEL AND THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION." AL HAMISHMAR

REPORTED THAT AT THE END OF HIS TALKS THE SECRETARY SAID  
THAT THE U.S. ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF WORKING OUT A JOINT  
STRATEGY. (WE WOULD ADD THE OBVIOUS COMMENT THAT TO THE  
EXTENT THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN DEVELOPING A  
JOINT STRATEGY WITH THE U.S. THIS WOULD, OF COURSE, HELP  
THE LABOR PARTY IN ITS ELECTION CAMPAIGN.)

4. A THIRD GENERAL THEME IN COMMENT ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S  
VISIT IS THE REALIZATION THAT ISRAEL IS NOW DEALING WITH A  
NEW ADMINISTRATION AND A NEW SECRETARY OF STATE. HAARETZ  
NOTED TODAY THE "NEW STYLE IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY",  
POINTING OUT THAT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ISRAELI LEADERS KNOW  
MORE ABOUT THE INTENTIONS OF THE SECRETARY AND PRESIDENT CARTER  
THAN THEY DID BEFORE THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. AL HAMISHMAR  
COMMENTED: "...IT IS ALREADY OBVIOUS THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION  
INTENDS TO OPERATE IN A NEW STYLE, IF NOT WITH A NEW  
APPROACH. IT IS A MORE RELAXED STYLE WHICH, ON THE ONE  
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HAND, STRESSES IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THE GREAT INTEREST OF  
THE U.S. IN ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT IN THE REGION AND, ON THE  
OTHER, TRIES TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON MUTUAL PERSUASION ARISING  
FROM A GENUINE DESIRE TO BRING THE RIVAL SIDES TO THE  
NEGOTIATING TABLE." ALSO HERE THERE IS A NOTE OF CONCERN  
ABOUT THE FUTURE. HAARETZ SAYS: "MR. VANCE DOES  
NOT RADIATE AN AURA OF INTIMACY. NOT THAT WE HAVE REASON  
TO BELIEVE THAT HE DOES NOT CONSIDER ISRAEL A FRIEND OF  
THE U.S., BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE DOES NOT REGARD US  
AS THE ONLY FRIEND THE U.S. WILL FIND IN THESE PARTS."

5. THIS CONCERN ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION  
MAY PARTIALLY EXPLAIN WHAT MAY BE A STIFFENING I  
RECENT WEEKS IN GOI ATTITUDES TOWARD MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS  
AND RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. THE LACK OF  
FLEXIBILITY IN THE PRESENTATIONS BY ISRAEL'S MINISTERS TO  
THE SECRETARY'S PARTY CAN BE AT LEAST PARTIALLY ATTRIBUTED  
TO A DESIRE TO ADOPT A FIRM NEGOTIATION POSITION WHEN  
FACING A NEW AND RELATIVELY UNKNOWN FACTOR. HOW MUCH OF  
THE ISRAELI HARDENING IS DUE TO THIS TACTICAL CONSIDERATION  
AND HOW MUCH IT REFLECTS A LONG-TERM CHANGE OF STRATEGY  
IS NOT YET CLEAR.  
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## Message Attributes

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